



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of Academic Board held on Wednesday 4 April 2012.

Present: A Gilkison; A Cheshire; T Goodhew; Professor P Gough; Dr. S Grey; P Jones; Professor J Longhurst; Professor J McLeod; P Nolan; C Offler; Professor P Olomolaiye; O Reid; Professor R Ritchie; B Senior; F Tolmie; S Waite; Professor S West (Chair);

Apologies: D Allen; Professor G Atwood; Professor M Body; P Catley; Professor O Doran; M Frutos-Perez; Dr. J Harrington; L Harrison; Professor H Langton; Professor R Means; M Partington; Professor L Raphael Reed; J Rogers; Professor K Ross; J Rushforth; R Scott-Ward

In Attendance: J Midgley; A Osborn (Acting Secretary); C Rex; L Wicksteed

AB12.4.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Paper AB12/4/1 was received.

Academic Board approved the minutes of the 22 February 2012 meeting, noting that minute AB12.2.1.1 applied to student representatives elected to Academic Board and Academic Standards and Quality Committees.

AB12.4.2 MATTERS ARISING

AB12.4.2.1 Annual Monitoring and Evaluation

Members discussed the design of the new Quality Monitoring and Enhancement (QME) templates which had been developed by CAS in conjunction with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Experience and noted that faculties had also had input to the design. Whilst the Board articulated some concerns over potential overlap between the planning and QME processes it was **agreed** that market data would remain in the QME template which would in turn be kept under review. (*Minute AB12.2.2.12 refers*)

AB12.4.2.2 Hartpury College NSS Results

Academic Board warmly welcomed an update from the Vice Principal (HE) of the University's Associate Faculty, Hartpury College, on the college's actions to improve the learning resources score within the National Student Survey including the convening of student focus groups to develop understanding of the underlying issues. These had highlighted that the key issues for students revolved around the provision of study space and IT facilities. In response the College had:

- i. developed a bespoke HE centre open from 07:00 – 23:00 and 24

- hours a day during the examination period;
- ii. extended library opening hours;
- iii. provided extra IT facilities exclusively for HE students;
- iv. reviewed the purchasing and maintenance of book and journal stock.

AB12.4.3 THE HE LANDSCAPE AND UWE

[Presentation available online](#)¹

AB12.4.3.1 The Vice-Chancellor informed the Group that the presentation before them had been received by the Board of Governors during March in order to prepare the Board to engage with the output from the planning round which would both examine plans coming forward from Faculties & Professional Services and seek to develop a shared understanding of the long term vision for the University. This would drive the Board's consideration of the academic character of UWE which in turn would determine investment in people, estates and learning and teaching activities.

AB12.4.3.2 The current planning round would conclude later in the month and had prioritised:

- i. high quality provision;
- ii. the identification and development of cross Faculty and Department opportunities; and
- iii. the location of future investment and, where necessary, disinvestment to support it.

Academic Board would be invited to discuss the outcomes of the planning round at its June meeting alongside consideration of the key metrics.

ACTION: Vice-Chancellor/Secretary

AB12.4.3.3 During the presentation the Vice-Chancellor highlighted that the importance of developing and delivering a high quality student learning experience could not be underestimated within the emerging, and competitive, higher education market.

AB12.4.3.4 In pursuit of quality there were a number of key questions which UWE would be required to reflect upon including the:

- i. opportunities that could be provided to students;
- ii. way we work with employers to understand and meet their expectations;
- iii. distinguishing features of UWE;
- iv. balance of the current programme portfolio, its academic currency and market attractiveness;
- v. retention of students on programmes;
- vi. way colleagues are engaged to support the student experience;
- vii. roles of staff and students in the co-creation of learning, innovation and the identification of opportunities; and
- viii. use of research as an enabler of engagement and inspiration for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

¹<https://share.uwe.ac.uk/sites/ar/ab/Academic Board 201112/VC Presentation to Academic Board April 2012.pptx>

AB12.4.3.5 It was noted that UWE had previously relied on strong results within, the now historical, QAA Subject Reviews to demonstrate the quality of its provision. Should UWE be unable to effectively demonstrate the quality of its offer in the future the fee level would likely become unsustainable making further investment difficult.

AB12.4.3.6 Academic Board welcomed the Vice-Chancellor's presentation and further noted that:

- i. it would be critical to demonstrate investment and innovation was taking place alongside some of the more difficult decisions;
- ii. some existing policies, such as those for accessing Blackboard content, restricted both the learning experience and staff innovation.

AB12.4.4 SHELL AWARD FRAMEWORK (SAF)

Paper AB12/4/2 was received.

AB12.4.4.1 The Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Environment and Sustainability) endorsed the Quality Monitoring and Enhancement (QME) Report and highlighted good practice including the implementation of negotiated learning plans and the overall support provided for learners. The Board's attention was further drawn to:

- i. a highly positive report from the Chief External Examiner and the CIEH accreditation event;
- ii. limited references to student feedback within the report;
- iii. the need for the University to further support the team in overcoming the complexities of delivery; and
- iv. a requirement to give further consideration of the marketing of the framework which was not clearly signposted on the University's website.

AB12.4.4.2 During subsequent discussion members noted that:

- i. although a number of examples of it responding to demand were available a question existed as to whether the low numbers of students registered on the SAF was as a result of poor promotion or lack of market demand;
- ii. positive relationships with students on the SAF were also resource intensive and could be difficult to sustain with larger numbers; and
- iii. although many positive aspects could be drawn from the report further work was still necessary, particularly around raising staff awareness of the scheme.

AB12.4.4.3 Academic Board **approved** the SAF QME report and it was **agreed** that the SAF Team would be asked to look in more detail at the communication and marketing of the initiative and would also be invited to provide information to go into the weekly E-news for staff.

ACTION: Secretary to feedback to SAF Team [complete]

AB12.4.5 REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF UWE STUDENTS' UNION

AB12.4.5.1 The President of UWESU provided an oral update to Academic Board including the conclusion of the Students' Union (SU) elections, which saw a total of 42 candidates stand and recorded a record voter turnout of 16%. Following the elections the sabbatical officers for 2012/13 would be:

- SU President: Emmanuel Okon;
- VP Education: Olly Reid;
- VP Societies and Communication: Annabelle Turner;
- VP Community and Welfare: Louise Goux-Wirth;
- VP Sports: Nina Gizzie

Other positions elected were available on the [UWESU website](#)².

AB12.4.5.2 During further discussion:

- i. The Vice President Education updated members on the successful inaugural [Student Led Teaching Awards](#)³ for University staff and mentors providing recognition for excellent quality teaching and student support. The awards would become an annual event alongside the existing Rep Awards;
- ii. the SU President received reassurance from the Vice-Chancellor that points raised for Academic Board's attention by the SU were factored into thinking at the highest level

AB12.4.5.3 Academic Board expressed disappointment at reports of a perceived increase in the number of scheduled lectures being cancelled in the run up to the Easter break. In response the Vice-Chancellor reiterated that the cancellation of lectures was unacceptable and asked members of Faculty Executives present at the meeting to ensure the message was cascaded within Faculties.

ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor's and Executive Deans, Associate Deans and Heads of Department.

AB12.4.6 MATTERS ARISING FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEES

Paper AB12/4/3 was received.

AB12.4.6.1 Faculty of Arts , Creative Industries and Education (ACE)

In response to queries raised by the Faculty, the Chair confirmed that members of the Faculty Executive would be in a position to feedback previous Academic Board discussion of the ACE QME report and that the IT maintenance (shutdown) calendar would be open for discussion when it next came to the Board.

ACTION: SECRETARY

AB12.4.6.2 Faculty of Business and Law

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed ongoing work looking at the engagement of student representatives within the Governance Structure which would be reported to the next meeting of Academic Board.

² <http://www.uwesu.org/representation/elections/>

³ <http://www.uwesu.org/news/article/uwesu/Student-Rep-Awards-and-Student-Led-Teaching-Awards/>

AB12.4.6.3 Faculty of Environment and Technology

Academic Board welcomed feedback from the Faculty proposing to increase student access to Blackboard and advised that this would be considered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Experience in consultation with ISEG and DVC Rushforth as part of the ongoing development of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy.

ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Experience.

- AB12.4.6.3.1** The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Academic Calendar for 2012/13 had been finalised but that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning Teaching and Student Experience) would be asked, following discussion with Corporate and Academic Services, to bring the 2013/14 onwards calendar to the next meeting of Academic Board. In the meantime it the Faculty may be able to ameliorate perceived issues by examining the hand in dates set for coursework submissions where these in close proximity to vacation periods.

ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Experience.

AB12.4.7 **RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) AND RESEARCH FUNDING**

- AB12.4.7.1** The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic provided an oral update noting:
- i. that sixteen individual feedback meetings had been held with colleagues following the submission of work to the University's REF rehearsal project;
 - ii. Research had generated in excess of £37m of external income for UWE over the last four years;
 - iii. although Quality Research funding continued to decline following adjustments to the allocation formula, internal allocation for 2012+ had now taken place;
 - iv. 22 bids had been received for early career researcher funding and 20 PHD studentships were being advertised.

- AB12.4.7.2** Academic Board **approved** a proposal from DVC Gough that the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies be renamed to Centre for Understanding Social Practices

AB12.4.8 **ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT**

Paper AB12/4/4 was received.

Members welcomed an update from the Director of Corporate and Academic Services on the development of clearly defined models to ensure a shared understanding between Faculties and Professional Services on the roles of each in developing and maintaining academic partnerships and noted the work should not prevent or detract from existing activity.

AB12.4.9 REPORT ON CHAIR'S ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Members noted that on behalf of Academic Board the Chair had approved the:

- i. appointment of Professor Hugh Barton (FET) as Professor Emeritus.
- ii. amendments to the Professional Conduct and Professional Suitability Procedure (Minute AB12.2.6 refers)
- iii. addition of two awards to the Taylors Dual Award Framework;
- iv. awarding of Affiliated Institution status to the Marketing Institute of Singapore Training Centre.

AB12.4.10 MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Paper AB12/4/5 was received and noted.

AB12.4.11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 June 2012